

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

SUMMARY: Background.

On June 15, 1984, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delegated to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board) its approval authority under the Paperwork Reduction Act, as per 5 CFR 1320.16, to approve of and assign OMB control numbers to collection of information requests and requirements conducted or sponsored by the Board under conditions set forth in 5 CFR 1320 Appendix A.1. Board-approved collections of information are incorporated into the official OMB inventory of currently approved collections of information. Copies of the OMB 83-Is and supporting statements and approved collection of information instruments are placed into OMB's public docket files. The Federal Reserve may not conduct or sponsor, and the respondent is not required to respond to, an information collection that has been extended, revised, or implemented on or after October 1, 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Request for comment on information collection proposal.

The following information collection, which is being handled under this delegated authority, has received initial Board approval and is hereby published for comment. At the end of the comment period, the proposed information collection, along with an analysis of comments and recommendations received, will be submitted to the Board for final approval under OMB delegated authority. Comments are invited on the following:

- a. whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the Federal Reserve's functions; including whether the information has practical utility;
- b. the accuracy of the Federal Reserve's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- c. ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- d. ways to minimize the burden of information collection on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before June 16, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to Ms. Jennifer J. Johnson, Secretary, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 20th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20551. However, because paper mail in the Washington area and at the

Board of Governors is subject to delay, please consider submitting your comments by e-mail to regs.comments@federalreserve.gov, or faxing them to the Office of the Secretary at 202-452-3819 or 202-452-3102. Comments addressed to Ms. Johnson may also be delivered to the Board's mail facility in the West Courtyard between 8:45 a.m. and 5:15 p.m., located on 21st Street between Constitution Avenue and C Street, N.W. Members of the public may inspect comments in Room MP-500 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays pursuant to 261.12, except as provided in 261.14, of the Board's Rules Regarding Availability of Information, 12 CFR 261.12 and 261.14.

A copy of the comments may also be submitted to the OMB desk officer for the Board: Joseph Lackey, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: A copy of the proposed form and instructions, the Paperwork Reduction Act Submission (OMB 83-I), supporting statement, and other documents that will be placed into OMB's public docket files once approved may be requested from the agency clearance officer, whose name appears below.

Cindy Ayouch, Federal Reserve Board Clearance Officer (202-452-3829), Division of Research and Statistics, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) users may contact (202-263-4869), Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551.

Proposal for approval under OMB delegated authority to conduct the following survey:

Report title: Survey of Small Business Finances

Agency form number: FR 3044

OMB control number: 7100-0262

Frequency: One-time

Reporters: Small businesses

Annual reporting hours: 5,100 hours

Estimated average hours per response: 1 hour

Number of respondents: 5,100

Small businesses are affected.

General description of report: This information collection would be voluntary and authorized by law (12 U.S.C. §§ 252(a)(1), 1817(j), and 1841 et seq.). Individual respondent data would be provided in a public-use file. However, any information that could identify respondent firms, or the financial institutions that they use, would be excluded from the public dataset pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4)).

Abstract: This voluntary survey would be similar to the 1987, 1993, and 1998 Surveys of Small Business Finances (SSBF). In part, this survey would be conducted to collect information needed to satisfy the requirements of Section 2227 of the Economic Growth and Regulatory Paperwork Reduction Act of 1996. This law requires the Board to conduct a study and submit a report to the Congress every five years "...detailing the extent of small business lending by all creditors...."

The 2003 SSBF would gather data from small businesses on their financial relationships, credit experiences, lending terms and conditions, income and balance sheet information, the location and types of financial institutions used, and other firm characteristics. The survey would be conducted by a private survey firm, which would be chosen in a competitive bidding process. In conjunction with the Federal Reserve, the survey firm would update and finalize the questionnaire for the new survey. The survey firm would then conduct two pre-tests with a minimum of fifty small business firms in each pre-test. Following pre-test revisions to the questionnaire, the survey would be conducted by means of computer-assisted telephone interviews. Interviewing would likely commence in early 2004.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, April 10, 2003.

(signed)

Jennifer J. Johnson,
Secretary of the Board.